

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 10021

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SUBJECT: SOCIALISTS GIVE PRI A SCARE IN NAYARIT

1. SUMMARY:. OPPOSITION SOCIALIST PARTY (PPS) GAVE PRI SCARE IN NOV. 9 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS IN NAYARIT, ALL-OUT PRI EFFORT (INCLUDING, IT APPRES, WIDESPREAD FRAUD) BEING NECESSARY SALVAGE VICTORY. PPS STRENGTH IN ELECTION IS DUE IN PART TO COMBINATION OF ATTRACTIVE CANDIDATE, LONG TIME PPS PRESENCE IN NAYARIT, AND VULNERABLE PRI CANDATE. BUT OTHER RESPONSIBLE FACTORS - GROWING AGRARIAN AND OTHER DEMONGRAPHIC RELATED PROBLEMS, LACK OF RESOURCES TO DEAL WITH THESE, PLUS PERSISTENCE OF LOCAL BOSSISM IN HINTERLAND, - ARE PERVASISVE THROUGHOUT MEXICO AND PORTEND FUTURE POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES FOR THE RULING COLATION. END SUMMARY.

2. IN NOV. 9 ELECTION MARKED WITH MINOR VIOLENCE AND CHARGES OF WIDESPREAD ELECTORAL FRAUD, PRI APPARNELTY HAS WON NARROW VICTORY (BY MEXICAN STANDARDS) OVER OPPOSITION SOCIALIST PARTY (PPS) IN PACIFIC COASTAL STATE OF NAYARIT.

3. PPS HAD ATTRACTIVE CANDIDATE IN TEPIC MAYOR ALEJANDRO GASCON MERCADO, WHO HAD SOLID POPULAR SUPPORT IN STATE COMPETING WITH MOST BACKWARD IN MEXICO FOR POVERTY OF ITS POLITICAL LEADERSHIP. ACCORDING
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TO CONFIDENTIAL REPORT OF LAST APRIL, GASCON AND OTHER

PPS LEADERS MET PERSONALLY WITH PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA, WHO ENDED ENCOUNTER SAYING HE WANTED TO SEE GASCON ELECTED GOVERNOR OF NAYARIT. WHEN PRI SUBSEQUENTLY NOMINATED SENATOR ROGELIO FLORES CURIEL, WHO RESIGNED AS MEXICO CITY CHIEF OF POLICE FOLLOWING JUNE 1971 INCIDENT WHICH KILLED SEVERAL STUDENTS, MANY OBSERVERS SPECULATED OPENLY THAT DECISION HAD BEEN MADE DELIBERATELY TO LOSE GOVERNATORIAL ELECTION -- TO GIVE SUBSTANCE TO ECHEVERRIA "DEMOCRATIC OPENING". HOWEVER, FLORES (COMPADRE OF PRES ECHEVERRIA) RECEIVED FULL BACKING OF PRI. WHEN DANGER OF DEFEAT BECAME APPARENT IN LAST WEEKS OF CAMPAIGN, PRI POURED IN FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES. INVESTMENT PROJECTS WERE ANNOUNCED AS FAIT ACCOMPLI AND PRI SECRETARY GENERAL GOMEZ VILLANUEVA WAS DISPATCHED TO HEAD UP LAST DITCH EFFORT. IN IRONY WHICH PRI SPOKESMAN HAD SOUGHT TO DOWNPLAY IN MEXICO CITY, PRI GAVE DISTINCTIVE ANTI-COMMUNIST FLAVOR TO ITS CAMPAIGN AGAINST PPS, OFFICIALLY A MARXIST-LENINIST PARTY. IN LATE OCTOBER PRI PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE LOPEZ PORTILLO CAMPAIGNED WITH FLORES FOR SEVERAL DAYS.

4. WHEN POLLS CLOSED, PRI IMMEDIATELY CLAIMED CLEAN SWEEP AND SIXTY PERCENT OF VOTE, BASED UPON ITS OWN UNOFFICIAL TALLIES. PPS PROTESTED VIGOROUSLY AND CONFIDENTLY BUT THUS FAR UNOFFICIALS) THAT AMONG OTHER IRREGULARITIES MEXICAN ARMY TROOPS STOLE BALLOT BOXES AND THAT PRI WORKERS WERE CAUGHT HANDING OUT BALLOTS ALREADY MARKED. PPS PRESIDENT CRUICKSHANK STATED THAT PPS' ONLY HOPE WAS INTEGRITY OF PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA AND THREATENED THAT PPS ATTITUDE TOWARD PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN WOULD BE AFFECTED BY VOTE COUNT (PPS HAS ALWAYS SUPPORTED PRI PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES). IN LIGHT OF ABOVE MENTIONED CONFIDENTIAL REPORT, CRUICKSHANK APPEARED TO BE CALLING PUBLICLY ON PRESIDENT TO HONOR THEIR PRIVATE AGREEMENT. IN WHAT MAY BE ECHEVERRIA'S RESPONSE, PRI PRESIDENT MUNOZ LEDO FLEW TO TEPIC AND MET SEVERAL HOURS WITH CRUICKSHANK. SINCE TALLY WILL NOT BE ANNOUNCED OFFICIALLY UNTIL NAYARIT ELECTORAL COMMISSION MEETS NOV. 15, BOTH

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PPS AND PRI HAVE SOME FLEXIBILITY TO NEGOTIATE SETTLEMENT, E.G., RECOGNITION OF PPS MUNICIPALITY VICTORIES AND ADDITIONAL FUNDING IN EXCHANGE FOR DESISTING FROM CHARGES OF FRAUD.

5. COMMENT:

A. BY ITSELF, THIS INCIDENT ILLUSTRATES PECULIAR

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOM PRI ON ONE HAND AND
KEPT OPPOSITION PARTY ON OTHER AND HOW MECHANICS
OF ELECTIONS (DEALYED COUNT) PERMIT RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES.

B. THAT PPS, WHICH WON LESS THAN THREE PERCENT OF NATIONAL
VOTE IN 1973 MID-TERM ELECTIONS, HAD STRENGTH TO CHALLENGE
PRI IN NAYARIT IS DUES INTER ALIA TO CERTAIN EXCEPTIONAL
CONDITIONS (ATTRACTIVE PPS CANDIDATE, LONG PPS PRESENCE
IN THAT STATE, PLUS VULNERABILITY OF FLORES) COMBINING
WITH MORE GENERAL CONDITIONS. REVOLUTIONARY IN ITS NAME
AND RHETORIC, PRI IN REALITY IS, OF COURSE, QUITE DIFFERENT
AND HYPOCRISY IN NOWHERE MORE EVIDENT IN ITS
STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, WHERE LOCAL POLITICAL BOSSES
(CACIQUES) AND LOCAL OLIGARCHY LIVE IN CONDITIONS MOCKING
GOALS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE. IN SOME INSTANCES FEDERAL RESOURCES
PROVIDE ENOUGH STIMULUS TO CAMOUFLAGE DISPARITIES, BUT INCUMBENT
GOVERNOR OF NAYARIT WAS NOT PARTICULAR FAVORITE OF ECHEVERRIA'S
AND FARED POORLY IN COMPETITION AMONG GOVERNORS FOR FEDERAL INVESTMENT.
RESULT IN THIS INSTANCE WAS STRONG PPS CHALLENGE IN NAYARIT,
AND EMBARRASSING CHARGES OF FRAUD. IN OTHER AREAS, HOWEVER,
CONDITIONS ARE MANIFESTING THEMSELVES IN CAMPESINO LAND
INVASIONS AND INCREASING CONFLICT WITHIN RULING COALITION.
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